

天主教香港教區

秘書長辦公處

香港堅道十六號

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CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF HONG KONG

CHANCERY OFFICE

16, CAINE ROAD, HONG KONG

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CHANCERY NOTICE

DIOCESAN PASTORAL GUIDELINES ON THE RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC MASSES, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

In view of the subsiding of the Covid-19 epidemic wave in Hong Kong, the Government has relaxed its "Group Gathering" measures by amending the *Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance* [see *Prohibition on Group Gathering Regulation (Cap. 599G)*, and Annex 3]. On the basis of such relaxation, announced on 29 September 2020 and to be effective on 2 October 2020, Cardinal John TONG has decided to resume public Masses, in accordance with the following Diocesan Pastoral Guidelines:

I. RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC MASSES

1. Parish churches (applicable also to "affiliated Mass centres" in what follows) may resume public Masses on weekdays with effect from 2 October 2020 (Friday), and public Masses on Sundays from 4 October 2020 (Sunday). During Mass, the faithful may receive Holy Communion.
2. Churches should be well ventilated and seats cleansed and disinfected regularly, with a disinfected carpet at the church entrance.
3. The congregation should be limited to 50% of the normal capacity of the church.
4. When entering the church compound, the faithful should put on a face mask, take body temperature and cleanse their hands with sanitiser. The use of holy water at the church entrance should be suspended.
5. Ushers should see to it that those inside the church keep adequate social-distancing.
6. The use of liturgical booklets and hymnals should be suspended (projectors may be used instead).
7. Sunday collections should be taken up after Mass, with one or several donation boxes provided.
8. The sign of peace should be expressed by bowing heads, instead of shaking hands.
9. For the time being, Holy Communion should be received only "in the hand". One's hands should be sanitised before and after receiving Communion.
10. Once the Mass is concluded, the faithful should leave the church compound and avoid socialising.
11. After Mass, the seats in the church should be cleansed and disinfected.
12. The Parish Priest or those delegated by him should see to it that the foregoing Guidelines are duly observed.

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Notes:

- i. If necessary and feasible, while the Mass is being celebrated in the church, those who are not able to actually take part in the liturgy may be allowed, in an open, spacious area nearby (for example, the parish hall or the open area adjoining the church), to attend the Mass online and receive Holy Communion.

If arranging for Sunday Masses is not feasible under the current situation, a parish may fix one or more time slots for giving out Holy Communion to those who have attended Sunday Masses online and are properly disposed, by adopting a simplified rite provided by the Diocesan Liturgy Commission.

- ii. If necessary and feasible, a parish may arrange for one or two more Sunday Masses to meet the spiritual needs of the faithful.
- iii. Children, the elderly or the disabled and those who accompany them to Mass may sit together.
- iv. Attending the Sunday Mass is an obligation on the part of the faithful. Nevertheless, in so far as the pandemic is not yet completely contained, Cardinal John TONG, as a discretionary measure, permits the following alternatives to attending the Sunday Mass —
- a. Those who have worries that they might get infected by the pandemic if they come to church to attend the Sunday Mass, may attend it online (and receive spiritual Communion) or perform some acts of devotion, such as reading the Bible, etc.
- b. Granted that the seating in churches is being restricted at present, one can take part in a weekday Mass instead of the Sunday Mass.

The above discretionary measure will be terminated once the pandemic is fully contained and the local situation is back to normal. A related announcement will be made.

- v. Members of the faithful who are sick, as well as those who have someone undergoing “home confinement”, should not go to church on Sunday; instead, they can attend the Sunday Mass online or perform some acts of devotion.
- vi. **Bearing in the mind the spiritual needs of the faithful and taking into consideration the concrete situations of individual parishes, Parish Priests are to make suitable arrangements for weekday and Sunday Masses, or the giving out of Holy Communion. If they have difficulties in these matters, they can consult the Diocesan Curia.**

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II. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM AND THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

1. Sacraments of Christian Initiation for Adults

After the resumption of public Sunday Masses, parishes may celebrate the Sacraments of Christian Initiation for adults in small groups *on any day* before the coming Solemnity of Christ the King, using the Rite entitled "Sacraments of Initiation (full reception on one single occasion) during Mass" provided by the Diocesan Liturgy Commission.

2. Infant Baptism and the Full Reception of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation by Students of Sunday Schools

After the resumption of public Sunday Masses, parishes may administer baptism to infants (in small groups) *on any day*.

Parishes may also arrange for the students of Sunday Schools who are duly instructed to receive Confirmation and First Holy Communion in small groups so as to complete Christian Initiation, *on any day* before the coming Solemnity of Christ the King. Cardinal John Tong has granted Parish Priests the faculty for administering the Sacrament of Confirmation on these occasions.

3. Other Group Gatherings

Sunday schools, catechism classes, gatherings of lay associations and small-group meetings may be resumed, provided all anti-pandemic precautionary regulations are observed (see above I. 4-5; also, food or drinks should not be provided).

Given at the Chancery Office,
30 September 2020.



Lawrence Lee

Rev. Lawrence Lee
Chancellor